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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000322

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: AU SUMMIT -- ACTING ASSISTANT SECRETARY MEETS UK  
MINISTER FOR AFRICA

Classified By: AMBASSADOR DONALD YAMAMOTO, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (U) SUMMARY: On February 1 Acting Assistant Secretary Carter met U.K. Minister for Africa, Asia and the United Nations, Lord Mark Malloch Brown, on the margins of the African Union Summit. They discussed Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe and the situation in the Congo. END SUMMARY.

12. (C) U.K. Minister Brown described as "fantastic" the potential within the new Obama Administration for an energized policy focus for Africa. He considers the alignment of three key decision-makers (President Obama, Secretary Clinton, and USUN Ambassador Rice) with strong Africa interests to be fortuitous and an opportunity to build on a strong foundation of international humanitarian and development initiatives already en train.

SUDAN

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13. (C) Carter shared the gist of disturbing reports of imminent armed conflict in Muhajariya. (NOTE: Fighting subsequently broke out in the town between Government forces and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) rebels. END NOTE). Brown indicated the United Kingdom had received similar, but mixed reports of the impending escalation. Both agreed that the GOS failure to appreciate the consequences of its actions is regrettable. Brown noted a shared U.S.-U.K. dilemma vis-a-vis the ICC indictment - that the indictment gave license to JEM rebels (and others) to ignore the GOS. He also emphasized the United Kingdom is looking beyond the ICC indictment to larger and longer-term issues such as those surrounding UNAMID and the CPA. Parenthetically, Brown suggested that African and Arab states were now balancing their support for Sudan on the issue of the ICC indictment against establishing good relations with the Obama administration. Brown and Carter agreed the GOS response to the rebel activity revolves around the assets of the oil fields in Abyei. They also agreed AU/UN Special Representative Bassole needs active support, and the GOS needs to be persuaded the international community is serious.

SOMALIA

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14. (C) Brown and Carter agreed that the developments in the Somalia political process are encouraging, but that the facts evolving on the ground will ultimately determine the prospects for the Djibouti Process and internal stability. The presence of AMISOM, its strengthening, and the review of a UNPKO mission are all integral to progress. Turning to the composition and inclusiveness of the future government, U.K.

interlocutors asked what is the threshold for bringing in Islamists. Carter cautioned that the term "Islamist" needs to be carefully measured. The USG's concern is focused on Islamist extremists. He emphasized the United States views Al-Shabaab partisans as terrorists.

ZIMBABWE

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15. (C) In discussing the agreement of the MDC to participate in a unity government with Mugabe's ZANU-PF, Brown indicated the U.K. views it as problematic, and Carter said the United States would judge on the basis of practical actions going forward. Both the United Kingdom and the United States are skeptical about the prospects of success in the implementation of the agreement and share the concern Tsvangirai may not be up to the task of coping with Mugabe's agenda and machinations. Carter said Mugabe's image would have to become even more tarnished before he could be removed from power; Brown agreed, adding the United Kingdom assumes Mugabe will "screw it up." Both agreed they will need to move cautiously as the new government gets installed. Brown fully concurred with Carter's view that the donors must be careful not to be accused of trying to undermine or derail the new government.

CONGO

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16. (C) Both Carter and Brown think the developments in the DRC are surprisingly good and have come with surprising

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speed. While remaining cautious and vigilant, and recognizing the political process needs to continue in parallel with the progress on the security front, the new dynamic is highly encouraging.

17. (U) Acting A/S Carter approved this message.  
YAMAMOTO